

SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR

Policy Number: S.02.03

SCOPE

All Students.

DEFINITION

For purposes of this policy, “suicidal behavior” shall include an actual attempt to commit suicide or any other act or behavior which could result in death or serious bodily harm to the individual. This includes any verbal or written statement expressing an intention to commit suicide or to self-inflict serious bodily harm.

PURPOSE

The University of St. Thomas recognizes that suicidal behavior is not only self-destructive to the individual, but may also adversely affect the lives of others within the University community. Accordingly, the University of St. Thomas has established this policy.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. All suicidal behavior will be taken seriously.
2. If suicidal behavior is brought to the attention of the Executive or Assistant Director of Counseling and Disability Services, these individuals are bound by professional ethics to keep this information confidential. An exception exists if the student is believed to be in imminent danger of harming him or herself. In such cases, the professional is obligated to break confidentiality in order to protect the student or others from harm. In any case, the Executive and/or Assistant Director of Counseling and Disability Services would work with the student to get the help necessary for stabilization.
3. If the initial notification of suicidal behavior is made to a UST Security Officer, that officer shall immediately attempt to contact the Executive Director or Assistant Director of Counseling and Disability Services. The officer shall then notify the Vice President for Student Affairs and/or the Dean of Students. If physical self harm is imminent, the Security Officer shall immediately call 911.
4. If a student causes behavioral disturbances, refuses professional help, or behaves in such a way that his or her safety is in question and the student’s suicidal behavior is brought to the attention of the Vice President for Student Affairs and/or the Dean of Students by a member of the University community, the notified administrator will decide the course of action that serves the best interests of the individual involved and the University community.

These actions may include one or more of the following:

- Require the student to consult with the Executive or Assistant Director of Counseling and Disability Services.

University of St. Thomas Policies

- If the student is known to be under the care of a physician or other mental health professional, require the student to consult with such mental health professional. The Vice President for Student Affairs and/or the Dean of Students may also require verification that the student is currently receiving professional mental health intervention.
- Upon advice of the Executive or Assistant Director of Counseling and Disability Services, require additional psychological/psychiatric evaluation to be performed by an independent mental health professional who shall assess the student's emotional status and prescribe and/or initiate treatment intended to stabilize the student. Any fees and expenses incurred for such evaluation and treatment shall be the sole responsibility of the student.
- Require the student to leave the campus until interventions acceptable to the Vice President for Student Affairs and/or the Dean of Students have been established.
- The student will not be allowed to resume class attendance and/or other campus activities until a psychological/psychiatric evaluation has been completed, mental health treatment has begun and has been verified through written documentation. Documentation should include a statement by the appropriate treating professional regarding the student's medical and mental health stability and ability to safely resume campus activities.
- Additional appropriate conditions regarding class attendance and participation in campus activities may be established by the Vice President for Student Affairs and/or the Dean of Students upon the advice of the Executive or Assistant Director of Counseling and Disability Services or other mental health professional and based upon the circumstances then known to the Vice President and/or the Dean of Students.

Persons having questions regarding this policy should contact the Office of Student Affairs at 713-525-3570.

APPROVED: Dr. Robert Ivany

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